

4 April 2015

Chair, Members of the Committee my name is Anthony Gaskill. I am a staff member with Senator Monnes Anderson who is the Chair for this committee. I am here today to give a brief statement on behalf of her office regarding SB 920 and just touch upon the bill's importance as well as its intent.

Medical authorities in the U.S. warn that antibiotics are in danger of losing their potency due to antibiotic resistance. The cause of this resistance has been linked to the overuse of the antibiotics themselves. When used frequently, antibiotics are shown to select for resistant bacteria. While the overuse and misuse of antibiotics does indeed occur among humans, it is often times seen with food-producing animals as well, where 70% of medically important antibiotics being sold in the U.S. are used on food-producing livestock and poultry.

Instead of just being used on animals that are sick, farm animals are often routinely fed subtherapeutic doses of antibiotics in their daily feed and water supply to make them grow bigger more quickly, but also as a form of disease prevention. However, these routine, subtherapeutic practices breed antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can migrate into the human population, resulting in more prevalent and impervious bacterial infections that can cause further harm to the public's health.

SB 920 would seek to prohibit all routine and subtherapeutic use of *medically important antibiotics* on swine, cattle, and poultry for purposes only relating to growth promotion, disease prevention, feed efficiency, and weight gain. Farmers would still be able to continue treating sick animals with antibiotics, and have the ability to do preventative measures in the event of an outbreak, but not on a routine basis. The bill also requires EPA defined concentrated animal feeding operations to submit an annual report itemizing all their medically important antibiotic use to the OHA. The state is not required to do anything other than design and collect these reports. Only the OHA and the Attorney General will have authority with regards to administration and enforcement; the -1 amendment that has been submitted along with this bill would remove the citizen suit provision in Section 6.

Members of the committee I urge you to pass SB 920 with the -1 amendment. The FDA's actions on this matter fall way too short to be effective in curbing resistance. Drug companies would only be required to stop selling antibiotics solely for the purposes of growth promotion, while continuing to allow all other routine, subtherapeutic overuses. Antibiotic resistance is a public health issue that will one day have to be addressed, and it is crucial that it be addressed as soon as possible before a point is reached where antibiotics can no longer be used as effective medicine and the cost to fix the problem would exceed what it would be today.

Thank you.

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